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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, August 12, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Refrigerator Questions." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

If I were only a poet or a musician, I'd write a poem or sing a song in praise of--not the old oaken bucket--but the modern refrigerator. Among the great inventions of modern times, the refrigerator certainly deserves a place. A good refrigerator is the guardian of the family's health and first aid to the family's budget.

In the old days, in pre-refrigerator times, food used to spoil easily in warm weather. People had to eat partially spoiled food now and then. Ill health was often the result. But in those days no one dreamed of having the good fresh foods that we enjoy every day as a matter of course. The menu was limited. It had to be. The three meals a day were mostly made up of food that didn't spoil easily. The cellar was the coldest place in the house to keep food in, but not very cold at that.

But today a good refrigerator keeps food fresh and wholesome, makes it look tempting and thus encourages appetite. It also provides for many easily-made frozen dishes. The refrigerator saves money because it prevents waste and spoilage. It also saves the housewife's time. With a plentiful supply of fresh fruit and vegetables in the ice box, summer meals can feature salads, raw fruit desserts, and other dishes that require no cooking.

You notice that I said a "good" refrigerator. Every housewife ought to know the important points about a good refrigerator. Experts at the Bureau of Home Economics have made a study of home refrigeration and have found many helpful facts on the subject.

First, they mention the matter of insulation. "Is your refrigerator well-insulated?" they ask. That means, as I understand it, "Are the refrigerator walls built to keep the cold in and the heat out?" Special insulating material is used in the walls of the refrigerator for this purpose. The specialists say that you'll find pure corkboard--or its equivalent in some other insulating material between the inside lining and the outside walls of the good refrigerator.

Good insulation may make the refrigerator a little more expensive to buy, but it will pay in the long run, because it will keep the storage space cold and the food fresh. More than that, it will keep running expenses low and the refrigerator will give longer and better service.

Besides good insulation, you want well-fitted doors in your refrigerator--doors equipped with rubber strips called gaskets, and hinges and other fastenings that will hold the doors securely closed. And, of course, you want every



bit of hardware anywhere on the refrigerator of non-corroding metal. These also add to cost, but they lower upkeep and increase the length of life of the box.

Now let's talk about the matter of temperature in the refrigerator. After all the test of a refrigerator is the temperature it will maintain. The experts advise taking the temperature of the family refrigerator or ice-box to see if it is giving you good service. And find out about the temperature of any new refrigerator before you buy it. The family's health, during the hot weather may depend on how cold it is inside your refrigerator. Even if you have only a very limited amount of money to spend on keeping food cool, there are some very efficient ice chests.

What is the proper temperature for keeping food? That depends, say the experts upon the kind of food. Some foods need to be kept colder than others. And some parts of any refrigerator are colder than others. So distribute the foods accordingly. A good box provides for thorough circulation of air inside. The current of cold air first passes over the ice or the mechanical cooling unit where it is chilled. Then the cold air passes over the food to chill it. Naturally, the air will be coolest right at that place where it comes off the ice. Therefore store foods that need to be very cold--milk or milk dishes or butter or meat broth--store such foods in the very coldest part of the refrigerator. This is the part which is often called the milk compartment. The temperature in this compartment should be 45 degrees F. or a little lower.

The next coldest place is the compartment next to the milk compartment. Here is the place for uncooked meat and poultry and cooked food containing meat or milk. This compartment in a good refrigerator may be two degrees or so warmer than the milk compartment. In the next space go eggs, other cooked foods, and berries. About 48 or 50 degrees for them. Finally, in the warmest part of the ice box, in that section which the current of air reaches last, just before it goes back to be cooled--in this warmest compartment put the raw vegetables and fruits, except berries.

The facts boil down to just this: The coldest part of an efficient ice box will be at least as low as 45 degrees F., and the average throughout the food compartments will be not higher than 50 degrees F.

Here's another refrigerator question: "Should foods be covered in the ice box?"

Answer: Foods high in water content like lettuce, celery, radishes and so on need covering; otherwise that current of cold but dry air that passes over them will dry and wilt them. Cover butter and milk because they have a habit of taking the flavors and odors from other foods. Cover fish and other strong-flavored foods to prevent them from giving a taste to other foods. But eggs, lemons, oranges and anything else with its own protective covering can go right in the refrigerator "as is". Leave uncooked meats uncovered or with just a sheet of wax paper laid over the top. Of course, you know that bananas keep better in room temperature, so don't put these in your refrigerator.

Now then, let's close the refrigerator door, get our pencils and paper and plan a Sunday dinner. Are you having company? So am I. But let's have a simple dinner, anyway, and one that's easy to cook.





For this dinner, I'm having a new salad--ginger ale salad. Yes, I'll give you the recipe just as soon as I've finished the menu.

The menu: Lamb chops; Buttered rice; Buttered beets; Ginger ale salad served with crisp saltines; and Fresh peach ice cream.

You can make the ginger ale salad the night before and keep it in your refrigerator. The boiled rice will look extra gay with a dash of red paprika over the top or a bit of chopped parsley by way of decoration.

Here's the recipe for ginger ale salad.

Ten ingredients:

2 tablespoons gelatin	1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup cold water	1 cucumber finely diced or
1 small can crushed pineapple	1/2 cup celery
2 tablespoons lemon juice	2 teaspoons chopped pimento
2 tablespoons sugar	2 cups ginger ale

Let me repeat the 10 ingredients for ginger ale salad. (Repeat)

Soak the gelatin in the cold water for 5 minutes. Strain the juice from the pineapple. Heat the juice to the boiling point and pour it over the gelatin and stir until the gelatin has dissolved. Add the lemon juice, sugar, and salt. Chill this mixture and stir in the crushed pineapple, the diced cucumber, and the pimento. Again chill. When semi-solid, add the ginger ale, stirring as little as possible to be well mixed. Pour into a dampened large or individual molds and when firm serve on lettuce with mayonnaise.

Monday - An Economy Menu and some hints on caring for milk in hot weather.





Refrigerator questions

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